

American

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Secretary Clinton and Egypt's Amr Hold Crucial Bilateral Talks	1
U.S.-China Energy Advances Get Intellectual Property Protection	1
Treasures from Nigeria Reveal Rich Artistic Heritage	2
U.S. Call for Peaceful Demonstrations in Guinea	3

Secretary Clinton and Egypt's Amr Hold Crucial Bilateral Talks

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.

Washington — The United States fully supports the Egyptian people in their transition to a democratic nation as they conduct upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says.

"This takes persistence and patience, and it's often hard to have the latter in a time when there's so much pent-up demand and hope for a better future," Clinton said at a September 28 joint press conference with Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr at the State Department. "So we look to being a strong partner for the Egyptian people."

At their first official talks in Washington, Clinton and Amr addressed a broad range of bilateral and regional issues, from security to economics to education. Amr became foreign minister in the new government in July after having worked at the World Bank.

Clinton told reporters that during their talks Amr said that the Egyptian government has recognized the Transitional National Council (TNC) in Libya as that nation begins a similar transition to democratic governance. The United States formally recognized the Libyan TNC on July 15.

Clinton said Amr also reiterated Egypt's support for the 1979 Camp David Accords, which is essential for regional stability. The accords helped to establish a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

The secretary also recognized the work of the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which has been a crucial institution of stability and continuity after the ouster of the regime of Hosni Mubarak earlier this year.

"The Egyptian people look to the Supreme Council to support the transition and to ensure that the elections go in a very positive way that provides transparency, freedom and fairness," Clinton said. Egypt is planning parliamentary elections in November, the creation of a committee to draft a constitution, a referendum on the constitution and presidential elections in the first part of 2012.

"We are very supportive of the steps that have been taken in Egypt to establish a timetable for elections, to create the conditions that permit the elections to proceed, the formation of political parties, for example — a lot of free and diverse opinion being expressed," Clinton said.

Clinton told reporters that the United States is looking to

implement through the U.S. Congress a \$1 billion debt swap that President Obama announced in May. Rather than making interest payments on debt, Clinton said, the Egyptian people can invest that money into new projects that create jobs and give them a better standard of living.

The United States is also focused on trade and investment, and on the new Middle East Trade and Investment Partnership to help Egypt gain even greater access to global markets, Clinton said. The United States is seeking to establish an enterprise fund to help with new business startups, and is continuing work with the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation. All this is intended to provide economic support for what Egyptians are doing to bolster their own economy, Clinton said.

Clinton said the United States is also working with Egyptians to launch a network of community colleges across the country that would provide training for Egyptians to be able to take advantage of investment opportunities.

"Egypt has the largest market and the largest workforce in the Arab world," she said.

Amr told reporters that "Egypt and the United States have enjoyed a longtime friendship and partnership. The United States assisted Egypt in many ways in its development, and it continues to do so."

"And we are sure that our cooperation and our friendship will only strengthen in the future," Amr said.

Amr also told reporters that Egypt and the United States will continue their work for peace and stability in the Middle East and beyond the region.

Acknowledging that the Middle East is going through "deep change and delicate times," Amr said that the two nations will need to continue working closely to ensure that both peoples benefit from the opportunities that the changes bring.

U.S.-China Energy Advances Get Intellectual Property Protection

Washington — An ambitious energy collaboration outlined by President Obama and President Hu Jintao in November 2009 reached another milestone as the United States and China agreed on intellectual property protections for technologies developed through the U.S.-China Renewable Energy Partnership, the U.S. Department of Energy announced.

As the world's top energy consumers, energy producers and greenhouse gas emitters, the United States and China play central roles in the world's ongoing transition to a

clean-energy economy.

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Minister Wan Gang of the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology on September 23 witnessed the signing by U.S. and Chinese government officials of letters of endorsement recognizing intellectual property guidelines agreed upon by each of the three consortia that constitute the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center (CERC).

David Sandalow, assistant secretary of energy for policy and international affairs, signed for the United States. Ma Linying, deputy director general for international affairs at the Ministry of Science and Technology, signed for China in a ceremony held in Beijing.

The agreement protects American and Chinese researchers, scientists and engineers by ensuring their intellectual property rights to the technology they create. It also defines how intellectual property may be shared or licensed in each country. Participating members in each project may gain compensation on favorable terms, depending on their level of involvement in the final product.

"This innovative and enhanced framework for protecting intellectual property is an important step for the Clean Energy Research Center and collaborative research," Chu said. "With both the U.S. and Chinese governments supporting these agreements, we are freeing our researchers to offer their best ideas and encouraging innovative thinking."

Obama and Hu formally announced the establishment of the CERC during the president's trip to Beijing in 2009. Both presidents embraced a vision of wide-scale deployment of renewable energy, including wind, solar and advanced biofuels, with a modern electric grid. Noting that the two nations' combined market size means accelerated deployment of renewable energy in the two countries could significantly reduce the cost of these technologies globally, they agreed to work together to make that vision possible.

At that time, Chu joined Wan and Chinese National Energy Administrator Zhang Guobao in signing the protocol launching the center.

Since then, the United States has announced three separate grants totaling \$37.5 million to support the center. In October 2010, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson and China Minister of Environmental Protection Zhou Shengxian signed an agreement to formalize a separate partnership on environmental protection.

The three U.S. energy consortia leads include the

University of Michigan to advance technologies for clean vehicles; West Virginia University to focus on the next generation of clean coal technologies, including carbon capture and storage; and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory for energy-efficient building technologies.

Leading institutions in China are Tsinghua University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Housing and Rural-Urban Development.

Total funding for CERC, including private and public investments in both countries, will be at least \$150 million over five years. Funding provided by each nation supports work conducted by institutions and individuals within its own country.

Treasures from Nigeria Reveal Rich Artistic Heritage

By Lauren Monsen | Staff Writer

Washington — An exhibition of ritual objects in wood, ceramic and metal, described by the Smithsonian Institution as "some of the most abstract, dramatic and inventive sculpture from sub-Saharan Africa," offers a sweeping view of the artistic traditions that emerged over the course of 400 years in central Nigeria's 650-mile-long Benue River Valley.

Central Nigeria Unmasked: Arts of the Benue River Valley, which opened September 14 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, explores major artistic genres and styles associated with more than 25 ethnic groups living along the river's Lower, Middle and Upper reaches. Objects on display include sleek, columnar statues and vertical masks; helmet masks with human features; horizontal masks that combine stylized animal and human attributes; full-bodied maternal figures; ceramic vessels with anthropomorphic designs; and elaborate regalia forged in iron and cast in metal alloys.

"This exhibition is a treasure trove of outstanding works of art, placed for the first time within a broader context," said Karen Milbourne, curator of *Central Nigeria Unmasked*. "It sheds light on a heretofore little-understood but long-admired art-producing region."

All of the region's artworks had meanings and purposes, and they were used in rituals to protect the community or to reinforce the status of village elders and chiefs, as the exhibition explains.

Maternal figures — typically, wood sculptures of mothers with infants — were meant to safeguard women's health and fertility, and some ceramic vessels had similar functions. Masks might be used to ensure a good harvest, to protect hunters and warriors, to evoke the protective spirits of ancestors, or to enhance authority (clearly the purpose of a regal elephant mask, which was worn in

elaborate masquerades to emphasize the power of a local chief).

Although some communities along the Benue River might once have been considered remote or isolated, "the artworks confirm how mobile and interactive" they truly were, Milbourne said. "For instance, there is evidence of one Lower Benue sculpture of mother and children traveling approximately 200 miles. These works of art, and the ideas that informed them, were discussed and exchanged across wide distances."

Although most pieces cannot be attributed to their creators, *Central Nigeria Unmasked* "includes the works of six known and named artists," Milbourne said. "Visitors are invited to see the distinctive traits that characterize an individual artist's work." Also, viewers can examine multiple works in a given genre "to see the range of innovations and ideas" explored by artists working within the styles of their community.

Artists of the Upper Benue — most likely women, the exhibition says — produced highly decorated ceramic works quite different from the wood sculptures and metal pieces created by Lower and Middle Benue artists. This region also produced monumental wood sculptures of male figures, believed to be vestiges of an abandoned memorial tradition.

Lower Benue artists, including many from the Idoma, Akweya and Jukun peoples, created maternal figures that were kept on shrines where offerings could be made. The Tiv peoples of the Lower Benue were skilled metalworkers, producing ceremonial regalia — including a figurative ax adorned with a stylized human head — used by clan leaders to signal their status and power.

Among the exhibition's most elegant, abstract works are elongated figurative sculptures by the Mumuye peoples of the Middle Benue region. To Western eyes, these figures may recall the modernist paintings and sculptures of the Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), whose work was heavily influenced by the linear form of African sculpture.

"Many of these works of art are among those that most fascinated artists and collectors in the mid-20th century," Milbourne said. "In part, that is what makes this exhibition so compelling. These works of art have long been loved but up until now, they have not been adequately understood."

Viewed together, these works serve to illuminate the dynamic, fluid, highly inventive cultures of the Benue Valley peoples; collectively, they constitute "one of the major artistic legacies of Africa," according to the Smithsonian.

Commenting on the exhibition, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson said: "The *Central Nigeria Unmasked: Arts of the Benue River Valley* exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art stands as a sterling example of the deep, long-lasting ties and close bilateral and cultural relationship the people of the United States enjoy with the people of Nigeria."

"Exhibits such as this one help foster a close bilateral relationship, and as part of that effort, both nations have joined to establish the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission as a collaborative forum to build partnerships for a shared future," he said.

U.S. Call for Peaceful Demonstrations in Guinea

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson
September 28, 2011

STATEMENT BY VICTORIA NULAND,
SPOKESPERSON

Call for Peaceful Demonstrations in Guinea

The United States calls on those who will gather to commemorate the second anniversary of the tragic 2009 pro-democracy demonstration in Conakry Stadium to do so peacefully, as violence undermines rule of law and threatens Guinea's nascent democracy. During the demonstration in September 2009, 157 people were killed, and more than 1,000 injured when members of Guinea's Presidential Guard opened fire on unarmed peaceful demonstrators and also brutally raped and sexually assaulted hundreds of women. The Guinean people have worked long and hard to bring about democracy; and with legislative elections set for December 29, 2011, now is not the time to lose democratic progress that took 50 years to achieve.

The United States encourages all political players in Guinea to engage in dialogue and act responsibly in order to reconcile differences. We urge Guinean security forces to refrain from using excessive force to control demonstrations.

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